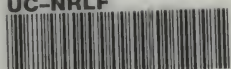
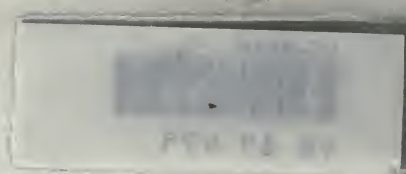


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# How Latin America Affects Our Daily Life

By W. J. DANGAIX

LATIN AMERICA, No. 1

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## Who Wants Facts About Latin America?

Chambers of commerce and individual business men, even those having trade with Latin America, are apt to forget that we need Latin America more than she needs us. This bulletin will interest them

Teachers of commercial subjects have easily fallen into the habit of looking to Latin America as a market for our exports. It is hard to interest children in markets for some one's else goods. It is easy to interest pupils in their own personal daily needs. They will like this bulletin

Assembly directors and public lecture planners want concrete facts about Latin America. The ordinary commercial summaries and technical discussions will not hold the general public. Facts like those given here will hold the general public as tests have proved

Classes in commerce and geography in elementary schools, high schools and colleges have with few exceptions never thought of Latin America as necessary to their own daily life and future comforts. The shortest cut to interesting them in the vital importance of Latin America to our own standards of living and to our own commerce, is furnished by facts like those given here by Mr. Dangaix which help us take the right attitude toward Latin America. The sooner we recognize that we need her products the sooner shall we adopt methods that will make her welcome our products

The author of this bulletin, W. J. Dangaix, formerly in business in Birmingham, Alabama, writes not only as a student of American and European commercial problems but from the observations of a year's travel, 1915-16, throughout Latin America.



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### Questions for the Reader Before Reading

In what ways are you conscious of depending upon Latin America for necessities, comforts, luxuries that you now enjoy?

So far as you now see, what hardship would it cause you if our trade with Latin America ceased to exist?

Will you try to formulate for yourself, either mentally or in writing, what your present feeling is towards Latin America so that you may compare this attitude with your feeling after you have read the following lesson?

### Where Latin America Affects Our Daily Life

Most of us who live in the United States are unconscious of the fact that Latin America supplies the United States with a great variety of useful and necessary articles of our daily life without which we would be seriously inconvenienced, even when not subjected to many privations and great hardships.

We are constantly eating, drinking, smoking, chewing, wearing, using, and working, playing and sleeping with bits of Latin America without even knowing it.

Being the greatest of coffee-drinking nations, we usually **Coffee** begin and end the day by drinking this Latin American product. The chocolate which many of us prefer is made from cocoa or more properly cacao also imported from Latin America. Both drinks are sweetened with sugar principally from Cuba. Such of us as have acquired the habit of drinking yerba maté or Paraguay tea, extensively used in South America, must look to Brazil and Paraguay for our supply of this excellent substitute for tea, which promises to become popular in the United States. **Yerba Maté coming**

Let pupils draw coffee pots, cups, grinders, sacks and routes from Brazil or Costa Rica and learn from storekeepers the quantity of coffee used in your locality each year.

It may seem strange to associate tropical Latin America **Cold drinks** with the ice-cream soda and other cold drinks we enjoy in hot summer days, yet without quantities of limes, pineapples, bananas, cocoa, coffee, vanilla beans and sugar from that part of the world, we might be denied the pleasure of many refreshing drinks; at least we would have to pay much higher prices for them. Even the tin, zinc, copper, lead, marble, onyx and

hardwoods found in soda fountains, ice boxes, refrigerators or ice cream freezers may have come from parts of Latin America!

## Fruits

Much would be missing from our lunch baskets and the table at home if it were not for certain food products furnished us by Latin America, such as bananas, cocoanuts, pineapples, citrus fruits, Brazil nuts, coffee, cocoa, spices, flavoring extracts, sugar and molasses.

Let pupils write of uses made at home of these food supplies and collect pictures from textbooks, libraries and home magazines of the home sources of Brazil nuts, bananas, coffee, etc.

## Cuba our sugar bowl

If we relied wholly upon our domestic production of sugar our candies, jams, jellies, preserves, pies and cakes would become articles of great luxury and the high price of sugar would caution us to use it sparingly even in sweetening our cup of coffee, tea or chocolate, or our desserts. Although the United States and its insular possessions produce a vast quantity of sugar from its extensive sugar cane and beet fields, we are dependent upon Latin America and especially Cuba for considerably more than half of our domestic consumption of this necessary commodity.

Our highly developed "sweet tooth" has led us to consume approximately one-fifth of the world's entire production of sugar. In 1915 our sources of supply of sugar were as follows: domestic 21%; insular possessions 24%; Cuba 52%; and all other countries 3%. Of this total supply of sugar we exported 6½% and held for domestic consumption the balance of 4,313,986 short tons.

It is fortunate for us that we have Cuba, the veritable "sugar bowl" of the world, in such close proximity. Cuba has almost unbroken cane fields along its 730 miles of length, producing more sugar and molasses than all other countries of the Western Hemisphere combined. Moreover, the "Pearl of the Antilles" leads all other countries in sugar production, which is over one-fourth of the world's production of cane sugar. Of the world's total sugar production about 2/3 is cane sugar.

The world's sugar production is now about 12% below that of the year preceding the war, owing to the large reduction of beet sugar in Europe incident to the war, a deficiency that is being rapidly overcome in Cuba and other tropical countries in the increase of cane sugar.

Cuba as the world's sugar bowl is a good subject for essays.

If it were not for Cuba whose enormous increase and cheap production of sugar has greatly lessened its cost to us, we might still be living under conditions of forty years ago when the cheap grades of candies which we spurn to buy to-day were then considered luxuries, as were preserves, jellies, jams and indeed all forms of sweets.

I recall being made happy with an occasional piece of home-made molasses candy and when I "blew" myself to a small stick of candy from the store, at the minimum price of five cents, it seemed that I was on a spree.

Many farmers in the sections of the Southern States where sugar cane could then be grown in competition with the high price of sugar, cultivated a cane patch with which to supply family needs of sugar and syrup. **"Long sweetnin"**

The grinding season, usually about Christmas time, was made the occasion of an annual fête, in which invited neighbors and more distant friends assisted in the work and joined in the festivities. These occasions usually extended over a period of a week and were truly enjoyable.

I recall quite vividly when a small boy attending a sugar cane grinding at a small farm on the south-east coast of Georgia. The farmer was quite a poor man who produced his own sugar, but having exhausted his stock of the previous year, his family was using syrup or molasses as sweetening matter rather than buy sugar at the high prices then prevailing. I was accordingly initiated into the use of syrup in my coffee, wholly as a matter of economy. The unpleasant memories of this "long sweetening," as the country folk call it, seems to linger in my palate and suggests an effective remedy for the coffee habit. This illustrates what would happen to most of us if the production of sugar were as limited today as it was then.

Few of us realize or perhaps even know that when we eat certain candies we are eating Latin American bugs—and I don't mean the invisible microbes which beset us on all sides, but real, sizable, crawling bugs, plainly visible to one even of poor eyesight! **Candy colors from bugs**

These bugs live on the cactus plants of Mexico and Central America where they are gathered, dried and sent to us for use in coloring matter for much of the candy we eat. They are known to commerce as "cochineal." I used to be told that cochineal was a seed imported



from tropical America. It was not until after my childhood days that I discovered the fallacy of this instruction. The truth, which seldom does harm, need not prejudice one against eating candies colored with cochineal, as this coloring matter is prepared in a way to meet the full approval of our pure food laws.

Chemistry classes will enjoy extracting dyes from candies and dyeing doll clothes.

Many  
vegetables

When we eat early bell peppers, snap beans, tomatoes and other vegetables, supposedly grown in Florida or Southern California, it is not improbable that they were shipped to us from the Isle of Pines, where many Americans are engaged in truck farming expressly to supply the markets of the United States in advance of the time when those vegetables can be produced in our own territory. Or it may be that these vegetables are shipped to us from Jamaica or some other island of the West Indies.

Even  
meats

When we eat a beefsteak, roast beef or mutton chop nowadays, it may not be from the packing houses of Chicago or Kansas City but from far-off Argentine or Uruguay—or maybe from still more remote Australia or New Zealand—brought to our shores in refrigerator ships.

Several periods might profitably be given to our future dependence upon Latin America for meats and leathers. Bring out clearly how fast and why our own cattle ranches have been disappearing and meat prices soaring.

This is equally true of beef extracts and other meat products. It will be increasingly true in the future as we must look more and more to Latin America for fresh meats and animal products of all kinds, in proportion as our population increases and our grazing lands disappear. The nearer the grazing lands the cheaper can we purchase meat. In Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, extensive regions are admirably suited for cattle breeding, offering large possibilities to those countries for creating a new and greatly enlarged export trade to the United States.

Skins  
for  
leather

Not only are imported fresh beef and mutton becoming more important to us but every particle of the animal is becoming even more important as our manufactures enlarge and extend. It is said that in modern packing houses absolutely nothing is lost but the bel-



low of the steer, the bleat of the sheep or the squeal of the hog. Maybe even these will yet be utilized in moving pictures, to describe more vividly the process of just what happens in a packing house. The hides, skin, wool, hair, tallow, grease, blood, horns, hoofs, bones and other residuary products are utilized in a great variety of ways, some of which are surprising. For example the loaf sugar which we enjoyed in our coffee this morning was made whiter by a process in which burnt bone dust is used, from bones that may have come to us from some part of Latin America after being thoroughly plucked by buzzards!

War demands for leather have raised the price of standard shoes almost beyond the reach of a person of ordinary means. We are ransacking the remotest parts of the world for all kinds of hides and skins with which to make leather; countries that have heretofore contributed but little if any, to our needs in this respect, such as China, Siam, the East Indies, India, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, South Africa, Egypt and Arabia.

The tanneries of Fond du Lac, Wis., were before the war using skins from Russia!
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We are even experimenting with shark skins that seem to offer a promising discovery as a substitute for leather. A large shipment of these skins was received from Cuba recently with the expectation that they can be successfully tanned and used to advantage in the manufacture of shoes. If this experiment proves successful new impetus will be given to hunting down the "man eaters" which have made frequent raids among bathers along our North Atlantic coast during the past few summers. Moreover, we are assured that the meat of the shark is palatable, that its liver produces an oil equal to the cod and of course the bones and other refuse can be turned into fertilizer. Thus it may be that the dreaded shark may become so useful that we will seek means of increasing its number.

**Shark  
skins**

We have long made leather from the skins of the sea-lion, seal, walrus, sea-elephant, porpoise, whale and manatee. The Bureau of Fisheries is now experimenting with the skins of the dog-fish, renamed gray-fish. This latter has been done to overcome the prejudice against the objectionable name. The thin leather produced from the skins of these fish is found suitable in the manufacture of novelties.

Rough sketches of these sources of leather plus descriptions of articles made from such leather will help visualize our shortage of cattle.

#### Saving crocodiles

Alligator and crocodile skins have become so scarce in recent years as to make the price even of small articles made of these leathers almost prohibitive; yet it is safe to say that more crocodiles can be found today along any one of the large rivers of Latin America, within the tropics, than there were ever alligators in Florida. The only difference in the general appearance of the crocodile and the alligator is in the shorter, broader and more rounded snout of the latter. Many of both species are thought to attain an age of fully a century. I have seen a few as long as 14 feet and have heard of others that measured over 20 feet in length.

Leaving Asunción, Paraguay, early one morning, on one of the large three-deck side-wheel steamboats plying between Asunción and Buenos Ayres, I began to count, as a pastime, the many crocodiles from 4 to 10 feet long, which were sunning themselves on the sandbars and banks of the Paraguay River, but after counting up to 500 within an hour, I realized that further enumeration would be too wearisome.

There were some places where fully 50 could be seen at a single glance. Not being hunted they seem to have little instinctive sense of danger. The near approach of the steamer within stone's throw of where they were lying motionless did not disturb them, but they frequently swam off in the wash of the steamer whenever it reached them.

A swollen dead crocodile was often seen floating by, doubtless killed by a rifle from a passing steamer, solely for the questionable means of proving good marksmanship. The vital spot is between the eyes. If the bullet hits any other part of the body it is usually deflected by the very hard tough skin, as I myself found, when as a boy, I used to shoot alligators in Florida and South Georgia.

#### Alligator leather

One of the wise precautions to protect cattle and hogs from unpleasant surprises by crocodiles along Latin American streams, is to enclose their habitual drinking places in a row of closely set stakes. Where this is not done, the sly crocodile is apt to catch them by the snout when in the act of drinking and easily pull them into the water where they are quickly drowned and devoured. If crocodile tears are then shed the remorse is shortlived.

They also lie in wait for the innocent fish, submerged in water and hidden in mud near the river bank. Once a sizable fish is caught between their jaws, they rise to the surface to swallow it, thus making sure that when they release their hold, with head in the air, Mr. Fish will not escape.

When they find only "fisherman's luck" under water, or perhaps to change their diet, these ugly amphibious animals in large numbers, crawl up on the sandbars and river banks where they lie motionless with their mouths wide open for hours at a time, attracting swarms of flies, bugs and mosquitos which furnish them a crocodile's hors d'oeuvre or appetizer. If a bird makes the mistake of coming within reach of what it supposes to be a dead animal, so much the worse for the deluded bird. The turtle seems to have a charmed life and "hovers" round the basking crocodile as desert birds make friends with the rhinoceros.

The crocodile is known by several names in the different countries of Latin America, the most common of which is "caimán," which is also applied to a cunning sly man.

For further facts about future great use of alligator and crocodile skins write to The South American, 165 Broadway, N. Y. City.
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Years ago when alligators were very plentiful in Florida, there was a noticeable number of cattle with cropped tails in the vicinity of rivers and lakes; the explanation being made at the time that they had lost their "fly-brush" in struggles with the "gators" when feeding in shallow streams or fording deeper ones. It was then a common occurrence for Florida alligators to drown and devour cattle, hogs, dogs, deer and other animals that ventured too far into streams and flooded swamps. When shooting ducks and other birds on certain Florida waters, alligators used often to beat the huntsman to the dead bird.

In those days alligator bags and suit cases were common, and even trunks were made of that leather. As a young man I often wore shoes made of alligator leather which then cost little if any more than those of calfskin.

We can't well bring back those days with the skins of Florida alligators, which have been almost exterminated, but with proper effort we might make crocodile leather as cheap to us as cowhide or calfskin and at the same time render a service to tropical America by ridding it of countless thousands of crocodiles that not only serve no purpose there but are a real menace.



We never gave any thought to the tons of alligator flesh and bones abandoned in Florida, after being stripped of the skins, but with a better knowledge and appreciation to-day of economic waste, it may be found that the oil and other products of the body of the crocodile will go far towards meeting the expense of obtaining the skin.

I was told on the Paraguay River that a crocodile skin did not bring over 50 cents in the local market, a lean reward for the native's time and labor (not to mention the risk and ammunition) in killing the animal, skinning it and curing the skin. Also that there is no incentive to engage in the business of shipping the skins, owing to the exorbitant freights and charges in marketing them in the United States or Europe. I was told much the same on the Magdalena, Orinoco and other rivers where crocodiles are as plentiful as on the Paraguay River.

I heard of feeble efforts here and there to develop the industry of gathering and marketing these skins, which for varying reasons were soon abandoned; but I discovered no good reason why any of the obstacles and difficulties complained of could not be surmounted with proper direction, energy, enterprise and capital.

These extensive notes about crocodiles and alligators aim to interest readers in civilization's pressing need for Latin America's unexploited and untold resources.

As the United States imports more hides and skins for our leather manufactures from Latin America than from all other parts of the world combined, it is altogether probable that the leather in your shoes, your book bag, foot ball, pocket-book, bicycle seat, traveling bag, the upholstering in the family automobile or carriage and the furniture at home, the harness of your pony, your leggings and gun case, father's razor strop, cases for toilet articles<sup>3</sup> and the many other uses in which we employ leather, originated from the cattle that roamed the prairies of Mexico or Central America, the llanos of Venezuela, the savannas of Colombia, the valleys of Ecuador, Peru and Chile, the vast pampas of Argentine or the pastoral lands of Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia.

Have drawn outlines of these countries and, inside them to same scale, outlines of your own state.

Marketing  
crocodile  
skins

Future  
source of  
leather

Your horn or bone handle jack knife and the handles of the table or kitchen knives at home may also have originated in these same cattle, as may also the hair which is mixed in the rough coat of plastering on the walls of your home.

**Knife handles**

The kid or goat skins that cover your baseball and the gloves you wear may have been tanned from the skins of goats that romped among the lower peaks of the Andes and the uplands of South America.

**Baseball covers**

Besides, the quebracho logs, various barks and pods, together with their extracts, that make possible our large industries in tanning hides and skins, come almost exclusively from Latin America, as do also dye-woods.

**Tanning extracts**

Why not have a leather merchant explain to your classes what tanning means and what would happen to our leather industries if we were cut off from Latin America?

Your woolen suit, knit jacket, mittens, cap, sweater, stockings, muffler, scarf, shawl, underwear, overcoat and the blankets, carpets and rugs at home, may have been made from wool clipped from the great herds of sheep on the extensive pampas of Patagonia, Argentine and Uruguay, or the less numerous sheep in the valleys of Chile and the uplands of Peru.

**Wools**

Much of our dress goods and material for men's summer suits and for covering umbrellas and also many fine shawls are made from the wool of the alpaca whose home is on the great Andean plateau in Peru and Bolivia.

The hardwood or bamboo stick of your umbrella or parasol may have come from the jungles of Latin America, and if the handle is made of vegetable ivory, the ivory nuts were certainly gathered from the tagua palm in the forests of Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela or Panama.

**Vegetable ivory**

It will be found that most of the colored buttons on your clothes and numerous small articles of daily use are also made from these wild nuts, which constitute an excellent substitute for the elephant tusk product.

**Colored buttons**

Have you ever thought what we would do if compelled to go without buttons? Have classes draw a tagua palm and trace the nut and button course by water and rail from forest to your storekeepers.

## **Panama hats**

The finest quality of the so-called Panama hat is made in Ecuador where it is known under the name of "jipijapa." These hats are so pliant and flexible as to be folded and carried in the pocket without injuring them in the least.

Some of the best quality of these hats are often sold in Ecuador for \$50 and I have heard of an occasional extraordinarily fine hat bringing as much as \$100 there, which means about \$200 here.

The Panama hat is made from toquilla straw, stripped from the immature leaves of a fan-shaped palm, from six to ten feet high, that grows chiefly in Ecuador and resembles somewhat our saw palmetto.

I had always believed the statement, often repeated from various sources, that Panama hats were woven under water. Continuous travel of a year through all parts of Latin America, disabused my mind of this and many other false impressions of those countries, which I had entertained all my life.

What is really true in the process of weaving the better grade hats is that the straw must be kept well moistened when being manipulated and that the weaving is done in the late twilight or early dawn. In this manner a skilful workman can complete a hat in five or six months. Native women and children are the most skilful hat weavers.

Originally the Isthmus of Panama was the distributing point for the products of the west coast of South and Central America and eventually these hats, originating in Ecuador, came to be known as "Panama" hats.

Cheaper grades of straw hat, of a variety of straw, are important items of export in Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and some of the Central American countries. These are commonly found in our markets.

## **Sombreros**

The wide brim, high pointed crown and gaily decorated Mexican sombrero is more picturesque than useful, according to our tastes, but it finds ready sale in Texas and other states along the Mexican border.

## **Aigrettes**

If today mother or sister possesses aigrettes for hat ornaments, they were surely obtained before the enactment of our law which prohibits the importation of these plumes, and you may be sure they came from the herons of Venezuela or Colombia.

The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1974 Broadway, N. Y. City, will gladly send information about the economic value of birds and laws against their ruthless destruction.



The ostrich plumes in mother's or sister's hat may not be from the ostrich farms of Florida or Southern California nor even from the wilds of Africa, but were probably plucked from the smaller variety of wild ostrich which roams the great pampas of Argentina and Uruguay or the prairies of Paraguay and Bolivia, where they are killed for their plumes and their meat eagerly eaten by the natives.

Ostrich  
plumes

The coarsest feathers are found in some of our feather dusters. Natives who do not possess a gun or rifle have a unique way of catching these birds by what is called "bolas," usually made of rawhide and having three ends with a stone, ball of iron or other heavy metal sewed in each end. They run down on horseback a flock of these ostriches and skilfully throwing the bolas, the momentum produced by the weights at the ends of the long straps winds around the legs of the ostrich and throws him entangled, giving the rider time enough to dismount and kill his bird by a blow in the head or by cutting its throat.

The guanaco of Patagonia, a wild animal that belongs to the same family as the llama, which it resembles, though somewhat smaller, is caught in the same queer manner as the ostrich, the reward being their meat which is said to taste much like venison, and their skins covered with a thin wool, much inferior to the llama, usually of light tan in color and having white spots. These skins are usually made up into rugs and bed coverings, but command a small price in Patagonian markets. I have seen herds of these animals in Patagonia, but they always kept beyond gunshot. When they feed some of their number act as sentinels on the highest ground in close proximity, and upon the approach of the remotest danger an alarm is sounded and off they gallop at an awkward gait.

Animal  
sentinels

Younger children will be interested in this analogy to our sentinels in children's games, our Puritan forefathers' beacons, and present day lighthouses and war sentries.

Another misnomer among the products of Latin America is what is known to commerce as "balsam of Peru," a sap gathered from a beautiful wild tree rarely found beyond a narrow strip of country along the southern coast of Salvador, and used as the basis of certain medicines widely sold here. Its original use was altogether in surgery. It has

Balsam  
of Peru

a wonderful stimulating property on wounds, while being also naturally antiseptic. It is an excellent remedy for certain skin diseases, and the cinnamic acid, one of its chief ingredients, has recently proved to be of service in treating tuberculosis.

This balsam of Peru is not from Peru at all, but is one of Salvador's most important exports, about 72 tons being exported annually, much of which comes to the United States.

In the early days when all of Spanish America was ruled from Lima, this balsam, then of new discovery, was first sent to Europe from Peru and as Peru was then a country of great fame it came to be known as "balsam of Peru" instead of its proper designation, "balsam of Salvador."

#### Cocaine

The coca plant, from the leaves of which cocaine is obtained, is extensively cultivated in Peru and Bolivia. This is very valuable to us in surgery, dentistry and medicine, but unfortunately it has become a curse to many people as a "dope" or vicious drug habit which is extremely difficult but possible to conquer.

Chewing coca leaves is a very common practice among the native Indians of the Andean plateau, who are seldom found without a supply of these leaves in bag or pockets. They masticate them at all hours, usually mixed with a little clay, which stains the inside of the mouth black. It is claimed that the cocaine content of these leaves produces a stimulating effect and enables one to endure fatigue without food for long periods.

200,000 drug addicts in N. Y. City! Stop for a lesson on drugs and other pernicious habits. Government control—exclusive—is being urged for all such drugs.
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#### Medicinal plants

A number of other medicinal plants, roots and herbs from various parts of Latin America are useful to us in the preparation of medicines. We should probably find others of equal or greater value if we took more interest in these countries and searched more diligently for the hidden treasures of their great forests. The dose of castor oil which you were occasionally coaxed or perhaps forced to take, might have been made from castor beans grown in Brazil.

#### Castor oil

#### Bay rum

When you enjoy having the barber dampen your hair with bay-rum or mother finds it soothing for a headache, you should remember that it is a specialty of

our newly acquired Virgin Islands, for which we recently paid the fancy price of \$25,000,000 to Denmark. We would have acquired these islands for the price of \$5,000,000 as agreed upon in 1902 but for a tie vote in the Landsting or upper house of the Danish Parliament which thus defeated the treaty already confirmed by the Folksting or popular house, and the United States Senate.

Our submission to the "hold-up" for five times the price, fourteen years later, was due more to our desire to avoid an open conflict with Germany over her threatened use or acquisition of the islands than any real need they are to us in defending the Panama Canal, for which they were ostensibly bought.

Here is the place for reviewing the Monroe Doctrine and showing that our growing population will soon make Latin America's products as necessary to us as her independence was to us in the days of President Monroe.

The sponge you use in bathing must have been fished up **Sponges** from the coral reefs and shallow shores of the West Indies and Central America, from whence practically all of our sponges come. If you use a rubber sponge the rubber in it probably came from some part of Latin America.

The mother-of-pearl handle of your penknife or the same **Pearl handles** material in manicure sets, buttons and other small articles, may not have come from Europe, Asia or Oceania, but may instead have come from the fisheries of Panama or Mexico. It is rather difficult to detect the difference between tortoise shell and the clever imitations in celluloid, but if mother or sister possesses some genuine tortoise shell in combs, spectacle frames or other small articles, these articles were likely made from the tortoise caught in the Bahamas or other islands of the West Indies.

If mother or sister is fortunate enough to own a string of **Pearls** real pearls, they may not have originated in the rivers of Arkansas, gems from which I happen to know are frequently sold in Paris as genuine Oriental pearls, nor may they have come from our own Missouri via Colombo, Singapore, Hong-kong or Tokio; but may have been found in the Pearl Islands of Panama whose pearls have been famous ever since Balboa in 1520 waded out into the Pacific and took formal possession of that ocean in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella. Or they may have come from the Island of Margarita, Venezuela,



whose pearls have been renowned for centuries; from either coast of Mexico and Central America, or from any other water of the Caribbean Sea.

We are wholly dependent upon Latin America for our chewing gum! The basis of it is a sap called "chicle," gathered from the achras sapote tree in the forests of Mexico, Central America and Venezuela, much in the same manner as maple trees are tapped in the New England states and Canada.

It is popularly supposed that we originated the chewing gum habit so widespread among us, but in reality this custom dates back to the Aztecs who were the first gum chewers of the Western Hemisphere. Cortés found the habit among them quite common. Even the name which still designates the sap, is of Aztec origin.

One reason why we appreciate so little our actual need for Latin America is that we know more of Aztecs than of 20th Century conditions. Contrast the Latin America found by Cortez and Pizarro with that described in publications (free) of the Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C.

Why the chewing gum habit should have been almost entirely dropped by the descendants of the Aztecs and why we, to the exclusion of all other inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere, should have taken it up with such vigor centuries later, gives rise to much speculation.

When a boy I gathered my supply of chewing gum from the sweetgum tree in the lowlands and swamps of southern Georgia. This gum, in its crude form, has the disadvantage of sticking to the teeth and I remember quite vividly the hours I used to spend in picking it out of my teeth. When children often hide their gum under the chair, table, bed or other article of furniture for further use at a more opportune time, it probably never occurs to them that the gum itself is not only from some part of Latin America, but the hard wood to which it is stuck may have come from the same forest from which the gum was gathered.

When at San José, Costa Rica, I became curious to know what boys were selling on the streets and squares to loud cries of "chicles," the meaning of which I could not imagine. Stopping one of the energetic "revendedorillos" in the attractive Plaza Central, I discovered that his tray contained chewing gum made in Philadelphia and sold under the brand "chicles,"

the plural form of the name of the sap which forms the basis of all of our chewing gum.

I wondered if the boys selling this gum or the Costa Ricans chewing it realized that every particle of the raw material entering into its manufacture may have originated in their own country or certainly in some part of Latin America before being resold to them at a good profit by the more enterprising North Americans! Even the tin foil wrapping was probably produced from the tin mines of Bolivia.

It was the first time outside of the United States that I had ever seen the gum chewing habit so general. This, with soda fountains, the character of displays in show windows, the "Yankee" type of stores and other surface evidences, seemed to point to our effective influence on Costa Rican life, despite the fact that the only public monument in San José is that in the Parque Nacional which symbolizes the Central American republics driving out the American filibuster, William Walker, from Nicaragua, in 1856, with particular reference to the battles of "Santa Rosa y de Rivas."

If you have mahogany furniture in your home, where it may also be found in doors, wainscoting and other house trim, or in the finish of your motorboat, sailboat or rowboat, the wood was probably grown in Mexico, Central America, Colombia or the West Indies, whence the larger part of our supply of that wood comes. **Mahogany**

When you see household, school and office furniture, floors, doors and house trim, of other hardwoods, not generally grown in the United States, these woods were probably imported from some part of Latin America. **Hardwoods**

The same climatic conditions which make Latin America our source of hardwoods also make Latin America look elsewhere, principally to us for "soft" or building woods.

The cedar-lined closet or cedar chest that safeguards your woolen clothes, furs and blankets from attacks by moths, is no longer possible from the fragrant Spanish cedar once so **Cedar**

plentiful in the Southern States, but the wood for them must now be imported from Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Brazil, and Cuba, whence also comes practically all of our material for cigar boxes.

**Whole of  
lead pencil**

It is altogether likely that every particle of the raw material in the lead pencils you use comes from some part of Latin America; the cedar from Cuba, the plumbago or graphite from Mexico, the rubber from Brazil and the copper band from Peru or Chile.

The geography of the lead pencil is a splendid subject for written and oral composition.

**Isinglass**

The mica through which you enjoy looking at the fire in the heating stove or grate during cold winter nights, may not have come from our mines, from Canada, Europe or India but probably from Brazil, from which country we are now importing a considerable quantity of this non-metallic mineral.

**Asphalt**

When you ride or walk along well-paved asphalt streets and roads, you should remember that such splendid conveniences, great promoters of commerce and development, and important aids to our health and happiness, are made possible by the asphaltum and bitumen that comes to us from Venezuela, Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados and Cuba.

**Our  
best  
streets**

Not only is asphalt very important to us in street and road-building, but in many other ways, such as its extensive use in roofing, as a water-proofing material, as a covering for electric cables, an inner lining for cold-storage plants, in calking the seams of wooden vessels, in the composition of varnishes and shoe-blackening.

It has a great variety of applications in our daily life and we are constantly finding new uses for it.

No one can ever again "patronize" Latin America after understanding our need for its asphalt. Have children list all the local uses of it and learn the tons used yearly.

We find this curious substance essential in the construction work of the earliest civilizations. It welded together the stones of the Tower of Babel and was used



in calking Noah's ark. It is found on the shores of the Dead Sea and the Egyptians used it in the preservation of their dead, the success of which can best be judged from the mummies in our museums.

The etymology of the word "asphalt" is lost in antiquity. Asphalt, asphaltum, bitumen, maltha or mineral pitch-mene are merely different names for the same substance.

The first use of asphalt in street or road-making was when a street was laid in Paris in 1854, but it was not until 1876 that we began to use it in paving Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

The "pitch lake" of Trinidad, from which we derive our chief supply of asphalt, has a circumference of three miles and an area of 104 acres, being perhaps the most remarkable occurrence of this mineral anywhere in the world.

Although from 100,000 to 200,000 tons of pure asphaltum have been taken from this lake annually for many years, it seems to make no impression on it. The next largest deposit of asphalt on which we depend is Lake Bermúdez, in the state of Monagas, Venezuela. Asphalt is also found on the shores of Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela.

What other articles of commerce, habits, or services (like courtesy) can be drawn upon constantly for the world's good without decreasing the supply?
---

Practically all the sisal, Tampico fiber, other vegetable fiber and textile grasses (except flax, hemp, jute and other specialties of Europe, Asia, Oceania, and manila from the Philippines) are furnished to us by Mexico, Central America and the West Indies, from which countries we imported during the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1916, material to the value of nearly \$28,000,000!

**Rope and  
twines**

But for this large supply of highly important raw material right at our doors, we would be paying greatly increased prices for such articles as twine and cordage, essential to the plantation, farm, ranch, factory, mill, store and our fisheries; ropes for our ships and boats, for hoisting purposes and operating machinery, shifting stage scenery, in tolling the church or

school bell, in swings and clothes lines, and in the manufacture of a great variety of domestic uses, such as matting, mats and hammocks.

Have samples of sisal twine or rope compared in class with manilla twine or rope.

Here is a good point to show why the Latin American supply is valuable not merely for its own sake, but because it lowers the prices which other sources can charge. As "a chain is as strong as its weakest link," so the price of all rope is as high as that of the last portions needed.

Few of us realize the extent to which Latin America contributes to our ever growing needs. **In the innumerable uses which we find for rubber**, which though high as it is, would be much higher were it not for the large supply of crude rubber shipped to us from Latin America and especially from Brazil, which country produces many times more rubber than all other countries of Latin America combined. Although large as is this production it is but a small part of what might be developed in Brazil alone, much less other countries of Latin America lying within the tropics.

**Our future  
rubber  
tree**

If we were wholly dependent upon crude rubber from India, the East Indies and other parts of the Orient, the supply might be sufficient to meet our ordinary needs, but such articles as automobile, motorcycle and bicycle tires and other large articles of rubber might be reserved for the very rich, whereas every one would feel the effect in the smaller articles of daily use, such as balls, elastic bands, sponges, gloves, nipples, fruit-jar bands, mackintoshes, rubber over-shoes, hot water bottles, stoppers, heels, boots and tennis shoes, electrical and insulating goods, bowling balls, golf and tennis balls, mats, toys, balloons, fire and garden hose, dental and surgical uses, rubber belting in factories, bathing caps, dress shields, etc.

From advertisements collect pictures of rubber articles commonly used. Why is Akron, O., our rubber center? Ask the Goodrich or the Goodyear companies for illustrated pamphlets. Show children how rubber, like maple syrup, comes from the sap of a tree.

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the production of rubber be more in keeping with our increased needs, and especially encouraged in the countries of Latin America, which are much closer to us than the East Indies, Straits Settlements, Africa and other tropical countries that produce rubber. Rubber has become so valuable owing to pressing needs of the European war that extraordinary prices are paid even for used rubber remade into the same or other objects.

When we appreciate the sanitary and preservative qualities of paint and enjoy its pleasing effect on the home, church, school-house or other building; on fencing, wagons, carriages, buggies, automobiles, bicycles, agricultural machinery, boats, furniture, fixtures and toys, it does not occur to us that much of this paint is made possible or at least much cheaper by the linseed oil with which it is mixed, made largely from linseed grown in Argentine, whence comes about three-fourths of our importation of this product. Besides, some of the other ingredients which enter into the manufacture of paints and varnishes come to us from different parts of Latin America.

**Linseed  
oils for  
paints**

It is little known that when we resort to candles for artificial light, for use in religious ceremonies, in illuminating the Christmas tree, birthday cake, Japanese lanterns, or for other purposes, we are burning up bits of Latin America in the carnauba wax from Brazil and the beeswax and tallow from several Latin American countries which enter largely into the manufacture of candles. There is enormous potential wealth in the vast Brazilian forests of the carnauba (or carnhuba) palm, one of the most useful plants in the world. Its wood is of special value for local building purposes because it resists the attacks of ants and other insects, so destructive to wood in certain sections of the tropics; the wood is valued abroad in veneering; the roots are used locally for medicinal purposes, sugar is made from the sap and starch from the stem; its fibers are used in cordage, matting, mats, hats, paper making, etc.; but the most valuable product of the plant to us is the abundance of wax gathered from the under side of its young leaves, used extensively in adulterating beeswax, in candle making, for coating the insulating material of electrical wiring, etc., and for which we shall find increasing and new needs.

**Candles**

**Covering  
for electric  
wires**

Of over \$1,500,000 of vegetable wax imported into the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1916,



practically all of it was carnauba wax from Brazil, yet very few of us have ever heard of this important product.

The fact that even encyclopedias and other reference books throw little or no light on the great value of this plant illustrates the need of increasing our knowledge of Latin American products and their variety of uses, and in bringing many facts, either misunderstood or wholly unknown, up to date.

Altho inexpensive, yet how indispensable is this wax wrapping! List other services which while seemingly slight are necessary to vast and indispensable services.

#### **Platinum for teeth**

If you have decayed teeth filled with platinum which alleviated your pain and restored your health by enabling you to better masticate your food, the chances are that the metal came from Colombia whose output of this precious metal is exceeded only by that of Russia.

The shortage of the world's supply of platinum has become so acute, owing to war requirements, as to have raised the price to over \$100 per ounce, five times the current price of a few years ago, but newly discovered deposits in Alaska promise to relieve the present strained situation.

Heretofore, about half of the world's supply of platinum was consumed in the manufacture of high-class jewelry and about 10 per cent was used in dentistry. The principal war requirements are in the process of making concentrated sulphuric acid, of great importance in the manufacture of munitions, and for contact points in the ignition system of gas engines.

As the Russian supply is not now available, we are largely dependent upon Colombia for this metal, generally found mixed with gold in the gravel of streams tributary to the San Juan and Atrato Rivers.

#### **Copper**

If it were not for our large importations of copper, principally from Mexico, Peru, Chile and Cuba the price of this metal would become abnormally high, and be reflected in the price of a great variety of articles and materials of daily use, such as in brass and bell metals, compositions into which it

enters; electric wiring, electric and other machinery, apparatus and implements, boilers and worms in the process of distillations, kitchen and candy-maker's pots and kettles, jars, urns and household ornaments.

Sketch copper articles used in your locality. List quantities imported annually; water and rail routes from Latin American mines; uses of copper in ammunitions.

No foreign metal is so important to us as tin, as we im- Tin  
port over \$50,000,000 of it annually, about one-half of the world's supply, and produce practically none of this metal except that which we recover from tin cans and other used tinned articles. About one-fourth of the world's output of tin is mined in Bolivia, the only country in the Western Hemisphere producing this metal in any considerable quantity; while the remaining part of the world's supply comes principally from more remote parts of the world—the Straits Settlements, China, the East Indies, Australia and Africa.

Before the war practically all of the world's production of tin was sent to Europe to be refined and it was there where we bought our tin. In consequence, by the purchase of one-half of the world's supply of tin, the United States has been paying the entire profits resulting from mining and milling this tin, including the big ocean freights on the ore, to the reduction works or refineries in Europe, shipment of the refined tin to the United States, broker's commissions, insurance, etc. It has only been since the beginning of the European war, when our supply of tin was interrupted, that we tardily began to correct this extravagant method of obtaining our supply of tin by building our first tin refinery which enables us to refine the tin ores which we are now importing, in increasing quantities, direct from Bolivia.

Bolivia is the only tin producing country showing a steady increase in the production of that metal in recent years.

With our greater encouragement and active interest in the further increase of tin production in Bolivia, we should be able to satisfy all of our needs of that metal from Bolivian mines, and in doing so create a new and large reciprocal trade with that country.

There is no metal more essential to our daily life than tin, and none that contributes so much to the lesser cost of life. We employ it in an infinite variety of ways in the home, on the farm, in the factory and commerce. We have special need of it in the preservation of food and handling liquids, in house roofing and gutters.

Try essays on Civilization's Need for Tin.

**Fertilizers  
for our  
fields**

The cultivated products of our fields, gardens and orchards, necessary to our very existence and which give employment to 40 per cent of our population; which largely sustain our splendid transportation facilities on land, sea, lake, river and canal; which keep our mills and factories humming; which add tremendously to our ever increasing commerce, both domestic and foreign, and make possible the enormous balance of foreign trade in our favor; the flowers and plants we enjoy and agricultural pursuits of all kinds; **all of this and much else have a direct bearing on the great nitrate fields of Chile, whose product is an important factor in our blessed land of plenty.**

Its use in the manufacture of fertilizers makes possible our bumper crops, producing food-stuffs, cotton and tobacco in such abundance as to go far in satisfying the needs of many foreign countries for these important products. Our success in breeding horses, mules, cattle and hogs, in conducting dairy and poultry farms is often dependent on the nitrate fields of Chile, because these nitrates in fertilizers have made more abundant and therefore cheaper the corn, oats, hay, fodder, cottonseed meal and other foodstuffs with which to sustain, fatten and multiply these animals.

The milk, essential to infant life; the butter on our bread or piece of cheese between slices; the bread itself; the sugar and milk in our coffee, tea or chocolate; our breakfast foods; the eggs and bacon, beefsteak and roast beef; pork chop, roast chicken, duck or turkey; rice or other cereals; peanut butter; meat products; fruits and fruit products; vegetables, pies and cakes, ice cream and practically everything edible on the table; even the tablecloth and napkins and the flowers with which the table is decorated bear some relation, directly or indirectly, to the nitrate fields of Chile.



Children or adults who understand civilization's need for nitrates and Chili's part in supplying the world can't help having sound and patriotic views about our relations with Latin America, and incidentally a valuable understanding of commercial geography's principal elements.

But the importance to us of Chilean nitrates does not begin nor end with the breakfast, lunch or dinner table. It can be traced to much of the clothing we wear; to the cotton in bed clothes, towels, carpets, rugs and an infinite variety of other articles; to the dentist's chair, nursery, sick room, hospital and especially the battlefield.

We would have been in a sad plight in equipping an army, safeguarding its arrival in France, housing it in canvas tents on the battle field, and sustaining it there with our agricultural and meat products and the necessary ammunition, were it not for the nitrate fields of Chile, which are also directly connected with the protection afforded us by our highly efficient Navy, forts, fortifications and defensive mines. Nitrates  
for war

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1917, we imported 1,261,659 tons of this nitrate from Chile, valued at \$44,231,240, and which represented about 42% of Chile's entire exports of this product.

Our dependence upon Chile is so complete in its monopoly of one of the greatest natural products of the Western Hemisphere, essential to us in the manufacture of fertilizers, gunpowder and explosives, and which furnishes us iodine, nitric acid and other by-products, that the United States Government appropriated \$20,000,000 in June, 1916, for building plants in the utilization of atmospheric nitrogen. Until this new process of supplying artificially our pressing needs of nitrates has been proven economically successful, we shall continue to be wholly dependent upon Chile for this important product.

Contrast plants grown in properly fertilized soil with the same plants grown in impoverished soil.

When we examine into the extent of our daily contact with the products of Latin America, we are astonished to find

that we have never been conscious of our dependence upon them in every epoch of our life, from the cradle to the grave.

We may be pardoned for our little concern in the origin of the rubber nipple, for which we used to yell so frantically; the cow feed which made possible the excellence of our milk or the tin saucepan in which it was heated; the candle used by mother or nurse, by the light of which our wants were satisfied at all hours of the night; the cradle and its bedding in which we were rocked; the toys which arrested our cries and kept us quiet and amused; the medicines which restored us to health, and the food which kept us alive; many details of the home and its furnishings in which we spent our childhood; and the objects associated with our earliest memories of happiness and joy.

**Ignorance  
inexcusable  
now**

We shall not longer be excused for our ignorance of the importance to us of Latin American products or our failure to take an active interest in their further development, and in the progress and advancement of Latin America and its peoples.

**We need  
Latin  
America**

The raw products of Latin America are of the greatest importance to us and are destined to become more and more so, in proportion as our population increases, our manufactures multiply, and our trade enlarges.

Not only are these products important to us during life, but even afterward, since we are apt to be buried in a cedar, mahogany or other hardwood casket, and lowered in the grave by ropes of sisal grass. Even the memory of us may be perpetuated by a marble slab from the quarries of Mexico or Guatemala.

### Questions for the Reader After Reading

What changes are you conscious of in your attitude toward Latin America due to reading this lesson?

What hardships would you personally undergo if trade with Latin America ceased to exist?

How would you state the reasons for teaching through schools and popular lectures our obligations to help Latin America develop her natural resources?

How many people in your own circle of business and social relations are unaware of our actual need for what in a short time Latin America alone will be able to furnish?

If entirely frank, would you confess to having held heretofore a rather patronizing attitude toward Latin America?

What difference do you think it will make in the way our merchants deal with Latin America, whether they consider Latin America indispensable to our welfare or whether they think of her merely as a customer to whom we want to sell or from whom we want to buy at a profit?

What change will it make in our government's consular service, whether we think of Latin America as indispensable or as a mere customer?

What does it mean when we say of foreign trade that "we must buy before we sell?"

For classes teachers will wish to ask many obvious specific questions about separate commodities in home and community use.



**Request for Help**  
from  
**Reviewers and Users**

**Will you frankly tell author and publisher if you feel that this approach to a study of our country's present and future relations with Latin America is effective?**

**Will you care for the second bulletin, Where We Affect Latin America's Daily Life? For how many copies?**

**Shall we include small black type questions and suggestions throughout the text?**

**Would you advise photographs in addition to questions and suggestions?**

**Would your local chamber of commerce like to mention this bulletin to members in an early bulletin?**

**Will you suggest ways of improving the presentation?**

**Will you send us names of persons to whose attention you would like us to call it?**

**Will you send us facts or questions which will help us prepare later bulletins?**

**Would you like an address on this subject? If so, please send for terms.**

**Would you like us to send you on approval one or more of the following publications:**

**High Spots in New York's Public Schools.**

**Record Aids in College Management.**

**State Work Against Infantile Paralysis.**

**Self-Surveys by Teacher Training Schools.**

**Self-Surveys by Colleges and Universities.**

**Rainbow Promises of Progress in Education.**

**Universal Training for Citizenship and Public Service.**

**Annual Report Institute for Public Service.**

**Public Service Weekly, 4-page post card bulletin.**

**INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

WILLIAM H. ALLEN, Director

51 Chambers St., City Hall Square, New York City

**Alternative Uses**  
**of**  
**"How Latin America Affects Our**  
**Daily Life"**

As one lecture this material would take 45 minutes, the usual length of a public lecture or address for business men's organizations. It may easily be reduced to 30 or even 20 minutes

For assembly addresses it can easily be broken into three or even five different talks by teachers or pupils with local applications suggested by material in these pages

For class exercises it lends itself to many different uses. Copies may be given to children and made the basis of oral and written composition or of topical recitations

Factory classes will easily be interested in this approach to Latin American commerce via their own daily living

In teaching facts about Latin America the first aim should be to make the pupil want to know more about Latin America which means that we must make him see that Latin America is already part of him and he a part of Latin America

¶ The world war was needed to rouse the United States and Latin America to an appreciation of their mutual interdependence

¶ Before 1914 we thought Latin America needed us more than we needed her

¶ The war has taught Latin America how dangerous it was for her to be dependent upon Europe for ships and banks and capital and coal and manufactures and a market for her products

¶ The war also taught us how dangerous it is for us to be dependent upon Europe and Asia for many necessities of life and commerce which Latin America produces in abundance

¶ If we are to take the steps necessary for our own self preservation more of us must appreciate how much we need what Latin America has to sell

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